

Written Testimony of Representative Joe Courtney (CT-02)
Make It in America: What's Next?
PANEL 4: "Making It" Across the Economy

At a recent visit to the Connecticut submarine manufacturer Electric Boat in my district, U.S. Secretary of Labor Tom Perez noted that our nation is facing what he called an "Eisenhower moment." In the wake of World War II in the 1950s, President Eisenhower led a national undertaking to develop the federal highway infrastructure that grew our nation's economy and connected our country at new levels. Secretary Perez asserted that today our nation must mirror that effort to develop a "skills infrastructure" in our workforce that will help our economy grow and succeed.

In Connecticut, partners at every level have united over the last five years to develop a regional workforce strategy known as the "Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline." Led by the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) and Electric Boat, along with the state Department of Labor, local community colleges and technical high schools, and many others, the Manufacturing Pipeline is equipping eastern Connecticut workers with the precise skills that employers are seeking — helping workers and their families secure good jobs, and strengthening our region's industrial base.

Electric Boat and Three Rivers and Quinebaug Valley Community Colleges in Connecticut, along with state technical high schools, have developed a customized 10-week training program aligned to the job trades in the most demand. I was proud to have been part of the effort to secure Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) strategic planning dollars, which led to the direct creation of 162 jobs and scores of additional jobs through the multiplier effect. Secretary Perez repeatedly stated that this approach should be replicated nationally.

My commitment to this invaluable effort is twofold. First, I am committed to ensuring that the Department of the Navy and Congress will continue to recapitalize our submarine and overall navy fleet through increased shipbuilding. The procurement of this work will create the demand for labor. Second, my commitment is to support local efforts partners to deliver of scalable training programs to build skill sets to fill these new shipbuilding positions in Connecticut and hundreds of their supply companies and to provide a roadmap for similar efforts around the nation.